SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

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DEMOCRATS PUSH FOR ADDITIONAL HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE

Republicans Choose Tax Breaks for Business Over Breaks for Seniors and the Poor

LANSING— Today Senate Democrats attempted to further home heating protections for Michigan's poorest and most vulnerable citizens. The Republican-controlled Senate instead chose to put the money toward attempting to trigger a new round of business tax cuts.

"Thousands of Michigan citizens are being forced to choose between heating their home and feeding their children or buying medicine," said Sen. Deb Cherry (D-Burton). "The harshness of winter has taken hold, and we cannot leave our poor and vulnerable out in the cold."

Senate Republicans voted down a Democratic amendment that would have required an additional \$58 million be made available to the Public Service Commission to help with skyrocketing energy costs. During the debate on the Senate floor, Republicans claimed that Michigan had not yet reached a "crisis stage."

"Families are already being forced to make impossible choices about how to spend limited resources," said Sen. Mike Prusi. "With overall energy costs sky-rocketing at the same time assistance dollars are dwindling, we need to ensure our most vulnerable citizens have adequate resources to heat their homes."

Republicans instead want the resources to go toward the Budget Stabilization Fund (BSF) in hopes of triggering a new round of business tax cuts. Under Michigan law, once the BSF reaches \$250 million, it will trigger automatic reductions in the state single business tax. With their actions today, Senate Republicans have taken the Fund almost halfway to the quarter of a billion dollar mark required to trigger new tax cuts.

"Voting against this amendment is tantamount to choosing corporate greed over the needs of our most vulnerable citizens," said Sen. Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek). "When your monthly heating bill is more than your monthly income, you need all the help you can get.